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C O N F I D E N T I A L LUANDA 000723

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/08/2018  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [AO](#)  
SUBJECT: OFFICIAL RESULT FOR 17 PROVINCES IN - LUANDA DELAYED

REF: A) LUANDA 697 B) LUANDA 700 C) LUANDA 704 D)  
LUANDA 715

Classified By: AMB DAN MOZENA FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The National Electoral Commission (CNE) released final results for 17 of Angola's 18 provinces on September 14; Luanda's results were withheld due to a challenge from UNITA. The MPLA won all of the seventeen provinces, taking over 80 percent of the vote in 12 of them. UNITA has filed a last minute appeal to annul the electoral results in Luanda, citing election day irregularities. Legal experts believe the Court will deny the appeal, on the basis that the irregularities did not materially affect the outcome of the election. If the CNE denies the appeal, as expected, the final vote tally and breakdown of seats in the new National Assembly should be announced by September 20. END SUMMARY

#### MPLA'S DECISIVE VICTORY

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¶2. (SBU) The CNE presented final provincial tallies for 17 of 18 provinces on September 14th, in accordance with electoral law's call for provincial results within 10 days of the election. The ruling MPLA won all 17 provinces, taking over 80 percent of the vote in 12 of the provinces. Lunda Sul was the only province in which they failed to win at least 60 percent of the vote; the PRS (Angola's third-largest opposition party, with strength in the Lundas) won 42 percent in the remote, diamond-rich province. The MPLA's final margin of victory remains in line with election-day counting trends as observed by the Embassy's election observation team in 5 provinces and, according to long-term EU election observers who were present in all 18 provinces.

#### UNITA FILES AN APPEAL

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¶3. (SBU) The CNE is withholding Luanda's final tally, pending resolution of a legal appeal submitted by UNITA to the Constitutional Court on September 12. The appeal focuses on the numerous electoral irregularities in Luanda (ref A), most notably the late opening of many polling stations and the CNE's failure to comply with legal voting procedures. UNITA is requesting that the votes in Luanda be annulled and a new election held. The CNE submitted its opinion on the case to the court on September 16, and the Court has 72 additional hours to make its ruling.

¶4. (C) Despite the legal challenge, UNITA has accepted the overall results of the election. According to one UNITA insider, the party's leadership is now wondering whether it made a strategic error in accepting the results so quickly (ref B), as it has undercut the party's complaint about the logistical breakdown in Luanda on election day. The insider said UNITA's leadership was disappointed by what it sees as the failure of western election observation missions to address these issues more forcibly.

COMMENT

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15. (C) COMMENT: We expect the Court to rule that the electoral irregularities did not substantially affect the results of the vote, and to uphold Luanda's results, an outcome provided for under electoral law. Statements made to the press by the spokesman of the Constitutional Court on September 15, in advance of the court's ruling, support this assessment. We think UNITA found itself between a rock and a hard spot when confronted with the clear message that the voters had repudiated the party, and may have chosen the best of several unattractive alternatives. In accepting the election results, UNITA demonstrated that it wants to play by the rules of democracy; by lodging this formal, likely futile complaint, UNITA put down a marker that such irregularities are not acceptable and must be avoided in future elections. Most now Angolans appear ready to move forward and are eager to see their new government get to work. END COMMENT.

MOZENA